

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the

application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): ~~Highly durable silica glass comprising 0.01% to 2% by weight, based on the weight of the silica glass, of at least one element selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, yttrium, hafnium and zirconium. A silica glass member for use in a plasma reaction apparatus using a halogen-containing compound gas and a plasma thereof, which is composed of a highly durable plasma-resistant silica glass consisting essentially of 0.01% to 2% by weight, based on the weight of the silica glass, of at least one element selected from the group consisting of magnesium, calcium, strontium, barium, yttrium, hafnium and zirconium.~~ The silica glass member according to claim 1, wherein the content of said at least one element is in the range of 0.05% to 0.5% by weight based on the weight of the silica glass.

2. (currently amended): ~~Highly durable silica glass~~ The silica glass member according to claim 1, wherein the content of said at least one element is in the range of 0.05% to 0.5% by weight based on the weight of the silica glass.

3. (currently amended): ~~The silica glass member Highly durable silica glass~~ according to claim 1, wherein said element is zirconium and the silica glass is transparent.

4. (currently amended): ~~The silica glass member Highly durable silica glass~~ according to claim 1, wherein said element is zirconium and the silica glass exhibits a variant coefficient of zirconium concentration as measured on plural micro-regions by an EPMA (X-ray micro

analyzer) in the range of 0.1% to 100%; said variant coefficient being defined by the following equation:

$$\text{Variant coefficient (\%)} = \sigma / C \times 100$$

wherein σ is standard deviation and C is concentration of zirconium.

5. (currently amended): ~~A~~ The silica glass member according to claim 1, which is a flange of a reaction tube, for use in an apparatus using a halogen-containing compound gas and a plasma thereof; said member being made of highly durable silica glass as claimed in claim 1.

6. (currently amended): ~~A semiconductor producing apparatus equipped with a silica glass member as claimed in claim 5~~ The silica glass member according to claim 1, which is a bell jar.

7. (currently amended): ~~A liquid crystal producing apparatus equipped with a silica glass member as claimed in claim 5~~ A semiconductor-producing apparatus equipped with a silica glass member as claimed in claim 1.

8. (currently amended): ~~A process for producing a highly durable silica glass ingot comprising simultaneously falling a finely divided silica powder and a finely divided zirconium-containing substance in a furnace using oxyhydrogen flame as heat source to form an accumulated layer of zirconium-containing silica on a bottom of the furnace; and extending the accumulated layer to outwardly radial directions, to form an ingot wherein zirconium is uniformly dispersed in a silica glass matrix.~~ The semiconductor-producing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said silica glass member is a flange of a reaction tube.

9. (currently amended): ~~The process for producing a highly durable silica glass ingot according to claim 8, wherein the finely divided silica powder and the finely divided zirconium-containing substance are fallen as a finely divided silica powder having deposited thereon a finely divided zirconium-containing substance.~~The semiconductor-producing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said silica glass member is a bell jar.

10. (currently amended): ~~The process for producing a highly durable silica glass ingot according to claim 8, wherein the finely divided silica powder and the finely divided zirconium-containing substance are fallen as a mixture of the silica powder and the zirconium-containing substance powder.~~A liquid crystal-producing apparatus equipped with a silica glass member as claimed in claim 1.

11. (currently amended): ~~The process for producing a highly durable silica glass ingot according to claim 8, wherein the finely divided silica powder and the finely divided zirconium-containing substance are separately fallen.~~The liquid crystal-producing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said silica glass member is a flange of a reaction tube.

12. (currently amended): ~~The process for producing highly durable silica glass according to claim 8, wherein the finely divided silica powder and the finely divided zirconium-containing substance are fallen in a manner such that the silica powder and the zirconium-containing substance are contacted with the oxyhydrogen flame as heat source to form an accumulated layer of zirconium-containing silica, and the accumulated zirconium-containing silica layer is maintained at a temperature sufficiently high for keeping a molten state to be~~

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~~thereby extended outwardly in radial directions.~~ The liquid crystal-producing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said silica glass member is a bell jar.

Claims 13 to 34 (cancelled).